

November 1, 2004

Dear FCC Commissioners:

Media is our society's primary means of receiving information. Are we to only have access to that which makes a far-away shareholder happy? What about local health info or senior issues or local political debate?

Communities must have adequately funded means and capacity to use the immense power and efficiency of media for a purpose higher than selling toothpaste.

Unfortunately, communities are often left to beg to the corporate interests to distribute even the tiniest amount of content in the public interest. And then it is usually done only if it can be spun to meet commercial criteria, and not at all if it doesn't relate to a large regional audience. Requiring corporate providers to provide a particular amount of public interest programming only serves up easy, off-time programming that may or may not meet real needs... and almost never, real local ones. Can you imagine a highway built though public land but only for big corporations to use? The public (collective owners of the land) would need to start hitch-hiking and hope a 14 wheeler owned by General Electric would be willing to give them a ride to the doctor's office.

This must be turned around. Commercial providers must not be the sole deciders what is said and heard in our local community. The PEG access model has clearly shown how our communities can benefit when we can leverage the power of media to serve the public interest. The PEG model is both efficient and highly effective when adequately funded and protected from corporate wolves at the door. Over 17,000 hours of non-commercial communication went out to our community on access channels last year. Programs on valuing diversity, profiles of immigrant neighborhoods, often misunderstood by the rest of the community,

and information to help seniors access the city bus system. Ratings winners? Probably not. But likely to make more of a difference in someone's life than 400 reruns of "Seinfeld".

I am a capitalist and I believe in the importance of a free and robust marketplace. I also like TV. But I believe that such a marketplace should exist as part of a free and robust community structure...not replace it. Our Country's founders understood the need for checks and balances. I'm sure none envisioned a nation where faceless corporations controlled the distribution of information. Please protect the public interest by establishing a community marketplace for ideas and information through electronic media; and the creation and dissemination of information designed not for profits but for people.

I urge you to require adequate capacity for non-commercial LOCAL community use of telecommunications on all systems breaching public land and air spaces; capacity that is unencumbered by a need to appeal to commercial interests; and funding structures that are based on the real value of the rights-of-way access granted to corporate giants.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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Mom & Wife
Consumer
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and
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